

# More give-and-take needed from GRIC

It was suggested in this space a while back that since the Gila River Indian Community seemed interested in some freeway improve-



## In This Corner

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Columnist

away from Ahwatukee Foothills in the process), a 22- to 26-mile extension of Loop 202 along the present Pecos Road that would one day link I-10 at the

ments along Interstate 10, it might be appropriate for the state of Arizona to explore the tribe's willingness to consider the bypass route along its northern boundary, a topic of considerable interest to Ahwatukee Foothills, not to mention the state as a whole.

You know, you scratch our back and we'll scratch yours.

Well, we were half right. Just as anticipated, the Gila River Indian Community has supplied the Arizona Department of Transportation a wish list broad enough to intimidate Santa Claus himself. But there have been no signals from the reservation hinting at flexibility on the state's projected roadway.

Indeed, the latest word from ADOT had to do with running the route along Pecos Road, implying the same no-help-from-the-neighbors that has complicated the lives of a whole raft of communities along the southern rim of the Valley for the last few years.

Lacking a willingness by Gila River to adjust its impressive development plans to accommodate the needs of others, of course, ADOT has no choice. It must continue to wade through the myriad objections of its constituents with plans to circle South Mountain with a roadway that would encroach on a lot of property that already includes neighborhoods.

The plan for the South Mountain Freeway offers a way to, at least in theory, route through traffic away from downtown Phoenix (and, of course,

east and west ends of the Valley.

Absent cooperation by the Gila River folks, it seems the best solution available to a problem of increasing urgency. But why should not the question of running the road just south of the reservation border, instead of just north of it, be at least a topic for discussion, especially in view of the things the Indians are seeking?

Here's a partial list:

- Frontage roads from Wild Horse Pass Boulevard (the route to the casino) and Riggs Road to the south;

- New or rebuilt interchanges at five locations along I-10, stretching south the length of the reservation and offering, among other things, freeway access to the reservation's Memorial Airfield, which residents of several communities to the east of I-10 worry is about to be expanded;

- And, last but surely not least, a request to create a way for animals, including the reservation's wild horses, to cross the freeway.

A spokesman for ADOT said the agency would look favorably on all the tribe's suggestions. Now maybe it's time for the Gila River Indian Community to do the same for the people of Arizona.

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